

The Hybrid Music System

"There is no comparable integrated music system for any micro."

The Guardian

Sound Worlds

Sound Worlds is the name of a new range of AMPLE music software packages for early years, primary and special needs. Each offers a versatile environment for exploration of a particular dimension of musical creativity, contributing to a library of packages that will grow into an invaluable resource for a wide range of classroom music-making activities.

All programs follow an overall design that provides accessibility across the whole range of abilities. A single display shows all the options and information in clear text and graphics, and a separate screen, common to all programs in the range, handles storage of work on disc. User input is primarily through music keyboard, touch-screen, joystick or other device - computer keyboard use is confined to selecting options with cursor and RETURN keys, and entering optional titles for stored work. The need for user guides is eliminated by the activity-specific nature of the packages, instant 'help' screens that describe all options, and on-screen messages that guide the user at all times.



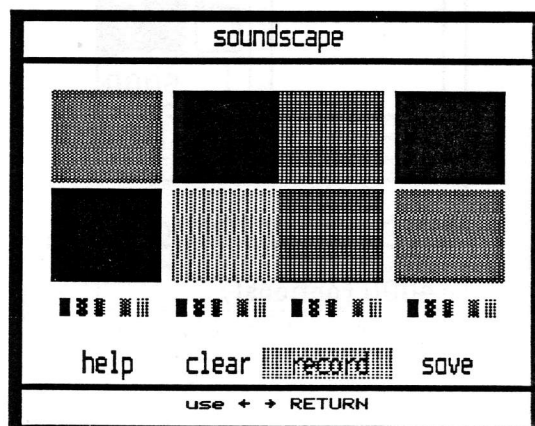
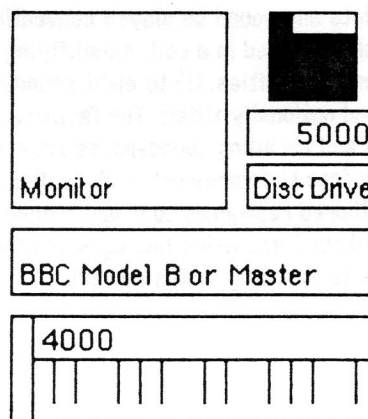
All *Sound World* packages require a BBC Microcomputer system (Model B or Master) with Music 5000 Synthesiser and amplification - ideally a stereo music centre, or alternatively a computer data recorder with appropriate lead. All packages can use, and some require, the Music 4000 Keyboard. Some require specific items such as the Microvitec TouchTech 501 touchscreen, or a joystick.

Soundscape

At its simplest level, *Soundscape* lets children compose sounds and perform with them, entirely through the music keyboard. The white keys play pitches as on a standard music keyboard, but the black keys can also play different sound elements, selected from thirty-five timbre, pitch and loudness shapes giving more than 600 possible sounds. The result is a highly versatile instrument, equally suited to conventional keyboard playing with a wide choice of sounds, and free-form performance with changing, abstract sounds.

The second level of use introduces the computer screen, displaying a coloured representation of the current sound. It shows how the sound elements are combined, provides a symbolic record to help recreate sounds, and gives an exciting visual dimension that can link to other subject areas.

Finally, any performance may be recorded complete with sound changes. It may then be replayed either singly or repeated as an ostinato, as an accompaniment to a second layer of sound played live. Recordings and individual sounds may be stored and recalled from disc without any typing, and optional titles may be entered through the computer keyboard.



Soundspace

Soundspace is a flexible musical instrument very different from, and an ideal complement to, more-conventional computer-based instruments and electronic keyboards. Player contact is through either a touchscreen, which detects fingers on the monitor screen, or a hand-held joystick, which displays its position as a marker on the screen. The instrument presents a *soundspace* in which a variety of sounds can exist. Different directions of movement determine pitch and spatial position, and a second finger or joystick button controls polyphony and texture, introducing chords and clusters of sound. This powerful gestural control provides an enormously rich variety of performance possibilities, from slow, developing sound colours to rapid harp-like glissandos. Unlike the conventional music keyboard, it is readily accessible to many physically disabled users.

Basic timbre, pitch and loudness shape are controlled by four boxes, each representing a choice for one particular sound element with a distinctive colour. In combination, these provide over 600 different sounds. The soundspace may be divided into cells into which individual sounds may be stored, visible as four coloured boxes in miniature. An initial touch 'picks up' the sound in that cell, so the player can instantly choose a sound and then use the full space to extend it.

Complex sound spaces are simple to create - 'walls' are dragged into place from the control bar at the top of the screen, encapsulating the last sound made. The optional Music 4000 Keyboard lets any sound be played conventionally, and lets any key pitch be stored in a cell, simplifying the creation of particular overall tonalities. Up to eight soundspace may be stored on disc, and optionally titled. The facilities for creating, storing and recalling soundspace provides a very powerful content-free IT framework with applications ranging from teacher-authored resources to support musical concept work, to advanced pupil activities linking with other National Curriculum subjects including maths and art.

TouchTech 501 or joystick

